

Context Sensitive Committee Meeting Minutes

To: Attendees and Invitees Date: October 3, 2005

From: H.W. Lochner

Project: SR-12 Environmental Assessment
STP-0012(8)60E

Meeting Location: Boulder Town Hall
Boulder, Utah

Subject: Context Sensitive Committee Meeting #4 (August 9, 2005)

The SR-12 Project Team and the Context Sensitive Committee held a meeting on August 9, 2005 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Escalante, Utah. The following individuals participated in the meeting:

Committee Member Attendees:

Allysia Angus, US Bureau of Land Management
Sharol Bernardo, Garfield County Travel Council
Scott Brodie, Boulder Town
Jim Catlin, Wild Utah Project
Sandra Garcia-Aline, Federal Highway Administration
Laurel Hagen, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Dell LaFevre, Garfield County Commission and Ranching Community
John Mavor, Bicycle Community
Sue Mosier, Escalante/Boulder Chamber of Commerce
Rick Torgerson, Utah Department of Transportation

Committee Members Not Present:

Marlene Stowe, Escalante City Council
Vard Coombs, Garfield County School District

Facilitators:

Kim Clark, H.W. Lochner
Michelle Fishburne, H.W. Lochner

Project Team Members:

Tyler Robirds, H.W. Lochner
Andrea Clayton, H.W. Lochner
Randi Shover, H.W. Lochner
Tod Wadsworth, Wadsworth Design Group

Additional Attendees:

Myron Lee, Utah Department of Transportation
Daryl Friant, Utah Department of Transportation
Angelo Papastamos, Utah Department of Transportation
Rachel Soderquist, Wadsworth Design Group

The following is a summary of the meeting (all italicized items were included on the original agenda):

1. *Welcome*

- Kim Clark of H.W. Lochner (Lochner) welcomed the attendees.
 - Ms. Clark proceeded to review the day's agenda.

2. *Updates Since Last Meeting*

- *Committee Comments on Meeting Minutes*
 - None
- *Committee Member News*
 - Jim Catlin stated that research that has been conducted by Utah State University in Logan Canyon has shown that the improvements that were made, including straightening and widening roads, has actually led to a higher accident rate. Basic data also shows that accidents involving animals have increased in the improved areas as this is a migration corridor for deer and elk. The speed was also increased in the improved sections from a design speed of about 35-45 mph to a design speed of about 80 mph. Mr. Catlin suggested the committee look closely at the relationship between AASHTO standards and accident rates and how improvements impact driving speed. He also suggested contacting UDOT regarding the project to get more accident rates/data before and after the improvements were made.
 - Sandra Garcia-Aline stated that Logan Canyon was done over several years and several projects - section by section. She stated that they haven't added capacity, just shoulders. She also stated that she would be very interested in the studies that were performed. Jim Catlin stated that they have added a third passing lane in some sections and that the perception of a straighter, wider road has led to higher speeds.

3. *Overview of Project Activities*

- The project team is coordinating with BLM regarding WSA Boundaries and identifying its GIS data.
- Three copies of the draft Purpose and Need Report were made available for the committee to review. It is currently in internal review with UDOT and FHWA. It will be sent to the BLM for comments. A copy will then be distributed to the committee members for their comments.
- The project team presented the SR-12 design criteria to UDOT. At this point in time, the project team is leaning towards the 3R standards. At this juncture, the project is not considered a reconstruction. Once a more detailed survey has been conducted on the pavement condition, then it will be determined whether this will be a reconstruction.
- UDOT crews have surveyed key locations such as Boynton, Hole-in-the-Rock intersection, Calf Creek area, etc.
- Jim Catlin asked about the design standards regarding headlights. He wants to know what the design speed is to stop in time before a motorist hits a deer. Rick Torgerson stated that it will vary based on the vertical curve. Sharol Bernardo stated that hitting a deer is often unavoidable. She was going only 5 mph and a deer turned into the side of her car. Mr. Catlin stated that he wants to know how fast you can go on a perfectly straight road and still stop in time when a driver sees a deer. Kim Clark stated that AASHTO standards address

stopping sight distance. Mr. Catlin stated that he doesn't think that headlights can see as far as stopping sight distance. It was decided that the specifics of the design criteria and stopping sight distance would be discussed in more detail at the break.

- Some of the many solutions suggested by the public, agencies, and members of the committee have been drawn up into conceptual solutions to show the committee members. This was the result of requests made by the committee at meeting #3 to "see" or "visualize" some of the suggested solutions. The conceptual solutions that were shown at the meeting are at the following locations:
 - Hole-in-the-Rock intersection
 - Escalante to Head-of-the-Rocks bike path
 - Entrance to Head-of-the-Rocks
 - Vertical curves at the bottom of Head-of-the-Rocks (later referred to as the "camelbacks" by Dell LeFevre)
 - Sharp horizontal curve at the bottom of Head-of-the-Rocks (later referred to as the "tank" by Dell LaFevre)
 - Boynton Overlook area
 - Calf Creek bypass
 - Escalante Trailhead/Calf Creek Area
 - Calf Creek Area
 - Calf Creek Campground entrance
 - The Hogsback
- Garfield County accident data has been obtained but has not been incorporated into the draft Purpose and Need report. It is currently being evaluated to ensure that accidents are not being counted twice.
- Members of the project team will be attending and setting up an information booth at the Scenic Byway 12 Community Celebration on August 27th from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- Kim Clark and Michelle Fishburne then proceeded to discuss the schedule for Phase I of the project and give an overview of what will be coming up in Phase II.
 - At this point in Phase I the project team has identified existing conditions, developed the draft Purpose and Need report (which will continue to develop as the project moves forward), and now are reviewing conceptual solutions to determine which ones to carry forward.
 - Allysia Angus asked at what point will a decision be made whether the document will be an EA or an EIS? Michelle Fishburne stated that UDOT and FHWA will determine the document type before Phase II.
 - Kim Clark stated that public involvement will continue throughout Phase II.
- Kim Clark and Michelle Fishburne then handed out a questionnaire to each of the committee members to get their feedback regarding their experience on the Context Sensitive Committee. They stated that the answers will be evaluated and will help determine the future of the committee.
- Michelle Fishburne then proceeded to discuss how the committee's and public's comments have been utilized. She stated that they have been incorporated into the draft Purpose and Need Report, the evaluation criteria, and the conceptual solutions.

4. *Purpose and Need Discussion*

- The draft Purpose and Need report for Phase I has been developed and is currently undergoing the review process. The outline of the report is as follows:
 - Introduction
 - Background
 - Other Related Actions
 - Project Development
 - Character of SR-12
 - Current Social and Economic Conditions
 - Purpose of the Proposed Project
 - Need for the Proposed Project
 - Community Outreach
 - Conclusion
- The context, as defined by the CSC and the public, has been captured in the following sections of the draft Purpose and Need report:
 - Project Development
 - Recent Transportation Studies
 - SR-12, Escalante to Boulder Improvement Study
 - SR-12, Escalante to Boulder Project Limits
 - Character of SR-12, Escalante to Boulder
 - Section 1 through 6
 - Current Social and Economic Conditions
- The purpose of the SR-12 Project has been defined as follows:
 - Provide sufficient right-of-way to perform adequate maintenance operations on and adjacent to SR-12
 - Provide safety improvements
 - Balance the needs of the various groups using the roadway
- The needs for the SR-12 Project have been defined as follows:
 - Problems maintaining the road
 - RS-2477 Right-of-Way/Wilderness Study Areas
 - Bridges
 - Roadway Surface
 - Slope/Shoulder Stability
 - Drainage/Erosion
 - Barriers and Guardrails
 - Miscellaneous Maintenance and Operation
 - Problems with Safety
 - Traffic and Travel Speeds
 - Geometrics
 - Road Width (Travel Lanes and Shoulders)
 - Sight Distance
 - Accident Data
 - Summary of Safety Concerns by Section
 - Problems with multiple user groups
 - Traffic Mix
 - Traffic Flow

- Bicycle Use
- Roadside Parking
- Jim Catlin asked if the purpose of this project is to increase speed and reduce travel time. Sandra Garcia-Aline said that it is not, especially because SR-12 is a scenic byway. Michelle Fishburne added that a need to increase speed or reduce travel time had not been identified in any comments made from the public, agencies, or committee. Speed and travel-time have also not been mentioned as issues or problems at any of the previous meetings. Rick Torgerson stated that the reason the project is leaning towards the UDOT 3R standards is because the design will have greater flexibility to meet the needs of the project and not just full AASHTO standards. Kim Clark stated that the needs that have been identified are what the project team has heard from people during the early coordination that has been done.
 - John Mavor stated that the vast majority of users on SR-12 are not using it to get somewhere. They are here to enjoy the road and not speed through it.
 - Allysia Angus asked whether it is part of the project's goal to retain the character of SR-12. Michelle Fishburne said that it is a goal to retain the character and that the Purpose and Need statement goes into detail on the character of SR-12.
 - Jim Catlin asked whether the committee would be given an opportunity to view the Purpose and Need document. Michelle Fishburne stated that the committee would have the opportunity to view and comment on the Purpose and Need statement. However, internal review must be complete prior to the committee receiving a copy.
 - Dell LaFevre stated that he has seen people go 90 mph on SR-12. He stated that it is the fastest road in Garfield County and that people ignore posted speed limits and warning signs.
 - Angelo Papastamos stated that the purposes that have been identified are true to the context of the area. There are safety issues that need to be addressed and that a passing lane may be required in certain areas. Safety and preserving the environment are the issues, not moving people from point A to point B faster.
 - Jim Catlin stated that the curvier and slower areas of the road are safer and that is in contradiction with AASHTO standards. He asked whether the accident was caused by the road itself or whether there were mitigating factors involved. Kim Clark stated that the accident data has been detailed out in the Purpose and Need statement and that the data is also on the project maps. Dell LaFevre stated that alcohol is the cause of most of the accidents on SR-12.
 - At this point the committee took a break. (A copy of the draft Purpose and Need Report was later handed out to each committee member to review)

BREAK

5. *Evaluation Criteria Discussion*

- The evaluation criteria for this project is based on the purpose, needs, and context sensitive objectives identified by the public and the CSC members. The solutions at this stage would, at a minimum, meet the identified purpose and needs. The evaluation criteria will:
 - Focus on the outcomes that are the most important
 - Decide what to use as minimum performance standards

- The committee discussed the context sensitive objectives that were identified by the public and the members of the CSC and made some modifications. They are as follows:
 - Objectives:
 - Preserve the history
 - Contribute to the culture of the community
 - Vision/Context/Experiences:
 - A project communities are proud of
 - The best for the community
 - Maintain SR-12 as the life-blood of the community
 - Contribute to a future for the young
 - Honor the history and the culture of the communities
 - Objectives:
 - Meet the transportation demands
 - Improve safety
 - Vision/Context/Experiences:
 - Meet the traffic demands
 - Grow to fit the increasing traffic
 - Some improvements
 - Make a little safer
 - Travel safely across
 - A safe and more beautiful road
 - Objectives:
 - Preserve the natural environment
 - Vision/Context/Experiences:
 - Do only what is absolutely necessary
 - Limit changes
 - Objectives:
 - Maintain the character of the road
 - Vision/Context/Experiences:
 - Enhance experiences
 - Objectives:
 - Maintain the visual appeal
 - Objectives:
 - Improve the ability to perform adequate maintenance operations appropriate to place
 - Vision/Context/Experiences:
 - Better maintenance
 - Road needs to be resurfaced
 - Concern regarding road conditions
 - Maintenance should be good quality and subtle
 - Objectives:
 - Balance the needs of the different modes of transportation
 - Vision/Context/Experiences:
 - Tourist traffic is difficult
 - Slow moving trucks and RVs
 - Summer traffic is really heavy for the size of the road

- There is a safety problem when it comes to bicycles
- Objectives:
 - Incorporate safety improvements that are consistent with the context of the roadway and environment
 - Vision/Context/Experiences:
 - Turnouts are needed
 - No more ugly barriers
 - Improvements need to be sensitive in order to preserve the landscape quality
 - Provide an alternative route for traffic to avoid Calf Creek and reduce traffic in Boulder
- Objectives:
 - Preserve water resources
 - Vision/Context/Experiences:
 - Preserve Calf Creek
- Objectives:
 - Incorporate science, research, and facts into the decision-making process
- Objectives:
 - Improve safety on SR-12
 - Vision/Context/Experiences:
 - Address safety along SR-12
 - Other areas along SR-12 need improvements
 - Dangerous curves located near Boulder
 - Danger from cattle on the road
- Jim Catlin stated he is concerned that the project will seek to meet the needs of and accommodate the dominant user and ignore the needs of the minority users. John Mavor said to be careful so the dominant user doesn't become the only user. Jim Catlin requested that another purpose of the project should be meeting the needs of the environment. Mr. Catlin and Michelle Fishburne discussed the transportation needs for the project for clarity. Mr. Catlin explained that he would like to insure that measures are taken to blend the disturbed areas along the road so that they will look natural and not stand-out like some of the existing side-slopes.
- Scott Brodie asked what exactly was meant by the objective "contribute to the economics of the communities." He is concerned that it is in reference to increasing the usage of SR-12. Sharol Bernardo stated that it doesn't mean an increased use it means make the users stop – slow down – and spend their money in the communities along the corridor. John Mavor stated that if the project comes to fruition, it would be beneficial to utilize local labor during construction.
- Kim Clark and Michelle Fishburne then proceeded to go over the evaluation criteria chart that was put together. The purpose of the chart is to gauge the committee's reaction to each suggested solution, determine whether a suggested solution meets the Purpose and Need and the context sensitive objectives, and to start a discussion between the committee members. They then proceeded to go through each purpose and the associated problems with each purpose. They are as follows:
 - **Purpose:** *Provide UDOT sufficient right-of-way to perform adequate maintenance operations.*
 - Insufficient right-of-way to maintain the road
 - Calf Creek Bridge is in poor condition

- Deteriorated roadway surface
- Slope/Shoulder instability
- Inability to clean culverts
- Difficult to find discharge points
- Inadequate and/or lack of side slope protection
- Lack of material borrow and disposal sites
- **Purpose: Provide safety improvements.**
 - Accommodation of future traffic (commuters and tourists)
 - Variable geometrics (curves do not meet posted speeds)
 - Horizontal/vertical curve combination
 - Lack of speed transition zones
 - Lack of area for adequate turnaround
 - Insufficient distance to stop or avoid an unexpected object
 - Excessive accidents involving animals
 - Excessive speed accidents
 - Conflicts due to cars moving at different speeds (i.e. slowing down to make a turn) (Hole-in-the-Rock Road, Calf Creek Campground, Kiva Koffehouse, Boynton Overlook, Boulder Dump)
 - Perception of insufficient vertical clearance
- **Purpose: Balance the needs of various groups using the roadway**
 - Lack of passing ability for different modes of transportation
 - Lack of roadway width to accommodate multiple users including bicycles and pedestrians
 - Seasonal peak traffic
 - Speed differential with different users
 - Roadside parking outside of designated areas
- Kim Clark and Michelle Fishburne also explained how the evaluation criteria utilized the context sensitive objectives. The following objectives were used in the evaluation criteria:
 - Preserve the history
 - Contribute to the economics and culture of the community
 - Meet the needs of the natural environment
 - Preserve water resources
 - Maintain the character of the road
 - Incorporate safety improvements that are consistent with the context of the roadway
 - Maintain and enhance the visual appeal
 - Incorporate science, research, and facts into open decision-making process
 - Improve ability to perform adequate maintenance operations appropriate to place

LUNCH

6. *Conceptual Solutions Discussion*

- Andrea Clayton with H.W. Lochner presented the Conceptual Solutions Discussion section. Ms. Clayton stated that these are not alternatives. They are merely suggested solutions that the project team has drawn up at the request of the committee. They should not in any way be seen as alternatives that are ready to be carried forward in the project. She also stated that the conceptual solutions do not include an all-encompassing list. They are a snapshot of

the approximately 450 suggested solutions the project team has received. The following concepts were shown to the committee. Under each concept is the list of comments from the committee and project team members:

- No Action
 - Andrea Clayton stated that as with every environmental study, a “No Action” alternative is offered as an option.
- No Action with Right-of-Way Acquisition (right-of-way undefined from Head-of-the-Rocks to Forest Service boundary)
- Hole-in-the-Rock Intersection
 - There is currently an interpretive sign study being conducted on behalf of the BLM that would incorporate an interpretive site near this intersection.
 - One concept was to add lanes to accommodate left-turn and right-turn movements.
 - Allysia Angus stated that an interpretive site was planned at this location. BLM does not intend to move it to Hole-in-the-Rock Road.
- Escalante to Head-of-the-Rocks Bike Path (separate from road but within right-of-way)
- Entrance to Head-of-the-Rocks: simultaneous vertical and horizontal curves
 - One concept was to flatten the existing vertical curve to increase sight distance for the horizontal curve. Jim Catlin stated that flattening the vertical curve would increase speed.
 - Another concept was to include additional signing to warn motorists of the upcoming curve combination and reduced speed.
- Vertical Curves at the Bottom of Head-of-the-Rocks (referred to as the “camelbacks” by Dell LaFevre) (sight distance is limited in this section)
 - One concept was to add a passing lane or pullout on the uphill sides of the vertical curves. Members of the committee wanted to know if lanes would be added in both directions and how long would they be. The project team responded stating that the drawn up solution has not been engineered. It is merely an illustration to show the committee what potential visual impacts there would be associated with this solution.
 - Dell LaFevre stated that he lost 7 cattle in this area. He also stated that he would lose 10-15 cattle a year prior to cattle fencing being installed. He feels this is the area where a bicyclist will end up getting hit.
 - Jim Catlin prefers pullouts to full passing lanes.
- Sharp Horizontal Curve at the Bottom of Head-of-the-Rocks (referred to as the “tank” by Dell LaFevre).
 - One concept was to increase the radius of the turn and widen it out to increase sight distance. Dell LaFevre stated that this curve, as it is, would not allow for two large vehicles to pass each other without colliding.
 - Another suggestion was to build out instead of cutting back the rock. The committee is concerned with the unsightliness of fill material. Allysia Angus asked Jim Catlin and Laurel Hagen what is an acceptable amount to cut away from the rock. They stated that it must only be done from a safety standpoint. Laurel Hagen stated that any more than 10 feet would be unacceptable.
 - At this point Dell LaFevre stated that the road is the way it is now because of blasting. It is part of the original creation of the road.
 - Jim Catlin suggested maintaining a 20 mph curve while providing a wider turning radius.

- Boynton Overlook
 - One concept was to lengthen the existing pullout and add a parking area across the road. Scott Brodie and Sue Mosier did not like the idea of the extra parking area. They felt it would be dangerous for people to walk across SR-12 near a curve to get to the overlook area. Members of the committee also were curious to know what the terrain is like where the proposed expansion might be.
 - There was also concern that adding capacity would only cause additional problems.
- Calf Creek Bypass
 - One suggestion from the public was to build a bypass route around the Calf Creek Area. The committee members were not supportive of this idea.
- Escalante River Trailhead/Calf Creek Area
 - One concept was to widen SR-12 in the Calf Creek area by utilizing a cantilever system over Calf Creek. This concept had mixed reactions from the committee members.
- Barrier Options
 - Andrea Clayton then showed the committee different photos of barriers that are more aesthetically pleasing and blend in more with the environment than the Jersey barriers.
- Calf Creek Area
 - In the area near Calf Creek where the guardrail is currently holding up the slope, an artistic rendering was shown utilizing colored shotcrete to stabilize the slope. This same rendering was shown to the committee members at meeting #3.
 - Allysia Angus wondered about using natural material instead of shotcrete. She stated that the problem with shotcrete is that vegetation does not grow in it.
- Calf Creek Campground Entrance
 - There is currently a sign after the entrance to Calf Creek stating “R.V.’s over 25 ft. not recommended in campground.” Committee members felt this sign needs to be moved before the entrance so R.V’s don’t pull in to the campground and then have to try and get back out.
 - One concept that was shown for the entrance to Calf Creek Campground was to realign the driveway approach at an angle closer to 90 degrees. Allysia Angus stated she is concerned about this solution as there is a BLM sign at that location that would be impacted and that the approach would be too steep.
- Hogsback
 - One concept utilized a retaining wall made of shotcrete that is two feet high so the view is not obstructed.
 - Another concept was to do a split-alignment on the Hogsback.
 - The last concept that was shown was to add a rock retaining wall and a bike/pedestrian lane into the side of the mountain below the Hogsback. Allysia Angus stated that if either of the two afore mentioned concepts were done there would likely be massive public outcry. Laurel Hagen stated that the project shouldn’t change the character of the road in this area.
- The project team asked if the committee had any other items regarding conceptual solutions they would like to add.

- Dell LaFevre stated that the old road needs to be preserved. Jim Catlin and Allysia Angus stated that they would like to have the old road mapped with a Global Positioning System (GPS).

7. *Evaluation Exercise*

- There was not time to complete this item.

8. *Evaluation Exercise Discussion*

- There was not time to complete this item.

9. *Future Committee Involvement*

- Kim Clark and Michelle Fishburne asked the committee members what they see as the future for the committee.
 - Sandra Garcia-Aline asked how the committee felt about continuing on an as needed basis when critical milestones come up. She also stated that when the project team begins weighing alternatives, they would like to hear the committee's perspective together rather than individually.
 - Allysia Angus stated that the committee has developed a relationship that allows them to come together and voice different opinions. She said that the committee is finally into the "meat" of the project and she would like to meet at least once more.
 - Laurel Hagen stated that the information she was given at this meeting is what she has been waiting for. She also said that meeting together as a group is useful and allows the committee to discuss specifics together.
 - John Mavor stated that he does enjoy meeting with the committee but he has many time constraints that make it difficult for him to take a whole day to meet. He wondered if it was possible to meet in cyberspace instead. Kim Clark stated that the project team has the tools and resources to do it that way but it would have to be limited to smaller groups.
 - Jim Catlin stated that he is heartened by the outcome of the committee meetings and thinks it will lead to a better result down the road. He stated that he prefers to meet face-to-face.
 - Scott Brodie stated that he would like to get the conceptual ideas ahead of time so he can prepare his response to the ideas before the next meeting.
 - John Mavor said he would like to see more of Tod's photographic renderings. He stated that the visual images are worth 1,000 words and that a person can tell immediately whether they like it (the idea) or not.
 - Allysia Angus suggested that when showing extreme design solutions, show them in a sequence with the less extreme ideas leading up to the most drastic.

10. *Next Steps*

- It was decided that the project team will determine major milestones in Phase II where it may be beneficial to bring the committee together.
- The next meeting is scheduled for October 21, 2005 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the new visitor's center in Escalante. (The meeting date was subsequently changed to the first or second week in November. Exact date TBA.)